

187

AN  
ADDRESS  
ON THE  
NECESSITY FOR INVESTIGATING  
THE OPERATION  
OF THE  
ANATOMY ACT,  
WITH A  
DETAIL OF PROCEEDINGS AS TO  
AN INVENTION  
FOR FACILITATING ITS ADMINISTRATION.

---

BY  
WILLIAM ROBERTS.

---

London :  
PARTRIDGE, OAKLEY & Co.  
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1855.

---

PRICE SIXPENCE.

WELLCOME INSTITUTE LIBRARY	
Coll.	welMmec
Coll.	patn
No.	Q5 4
	1855
	R64a



22500915597

## A D D R E S S, &c.

---

IN submitting this pamphlet to the notice of the public, my object is to place before them matter in which they have a large amount of interest. It is to the benefit of public policy that individuals, members of society, should not be borne down by the weight of power; and it is the duty of all to see that the acts of the legislature are fairly and justly administered.

As it is not possible to put the whole details of this case in so small a compass as I could desire; I, therefore, now propose only to take so many of them as I trust will make the subject intelligible, reserving for a future time any further statements that may be required.

The documents annexed are not selected as the most important, but solely because they are of the most recent dates.\* The certificates placed in the appendix, which are signed by only the highest anatomical authorities, show the importance and utility of my invention, and although some underhand attempts have been made to neutralize their value, neither the government, nor the teachers of anatomy will venture openly to take the responsibility of proving these certificates to be untrue. The following statement of facts will inform the reader of the treatment I have received, because my invention would have interfered with a snug parliamentary job.

It is my desire to keep my statement strictly within the record; but, as mistakes have been frequently made by taking the Mr. Henry Warburton here referred to, for Dr. Warburton, I beg to observe that Mr. Henry Warburton is the ex-member for Bridport and Kendal, and that he carried on the trade of a timber merchant in Pedlar's Acre, Lambeth.

It has been admitted for many years past by all Anatomists, that an antiseptic process, which would come at a small cost, would enable

\* I beg to solicit the reader's particular attention to these documents, as they contain additional matter bearing upon this address.



anatomical students to prosecute their investigations with greater satisfaction to themselves, and more to the benefit of the public. In consequence of my acquaintance with the disgusting state of dissecting rooms, and the loss of pupil's lives and health in these charnel houses, I was induced to devote my time, money, and labour, besides incurring great personal risk in going through a series of dangerous experiments, to endeavour to attain the desired object. After two years of intense application, I was enabled to place under the notice of the profession, a process complete in itself, to keep subjects intended for anatomical purposes in a natural and fresh condition for many months, at only a trifling cost.

I then invited the attention of the most eminent Anatomists, in London, to inspect the results of the invention, when they gave me certificates, stating its importance to the profession, and also its advantages in aid of the objects of the Anatomy Act. Having thus been furnished with proof of the utility and importance of my invention, the next step which I took was to enter a Caviat at the Patent Office for the purpose of securing myself remuneration for my large outlay and risk. The profession ascertained the course that I intended to pursue, and they signed the document, dated March, 1836, marked A in the Appendix. Immediately after having received this certificate, a letter of introduction was given me by the late Sir Astley Cooper to Mr. Warburton, then M.P. for Bridport, he being considered the "oracle" with the Government on all medical matters. Mr. Warburton said that a patent right would restrict the use of the invention, and thereby deprive the public of its advantages; he desired me to leave the case in his hands, and from what he said I was led to believe that through Lord John Russell, then Home Secretary, and who had the official conduct of the Anatomy Act, the opportunity would be embraced by the Government to adopt my invention as an aid in carrying out the objects of the Act. After waiting some considerable time, Mr. Warburton informed me, that I was to submit to him in writing, for the guidance of the Government, the lowest amount I would take as compensation—I complied with his request, and no objection was then made by him to the amount. That written document formed the basis of the negotiation.

Mr. Warburton put me off with a variety of excuses until February, 1837, he then told me that Mr. T. S. Rice, now Lord Monteagle, considered the invention of great importance, and that he had authorized him to make a report as to its "completeness," and at the same time intimated that the only condition on which he would consent to make his report, was, that "I should reveal the secret of the process to him." I urged that the documents given me by about sixteen of the most distinguished Anatomists in London fully proved all that could reasonably be required: he said, "the certificates only proved the efficacy and importance of the invention, but he wanted to be satisfied that the process was easy of application, cheap, and innocuous." I then pledged myself to these points, and offered to stipulate, that if my assurance was not borne out that I should not be paid the consideration money. Nothing short, however, of having the whole secret would meet his views; and as an inducement to comply, he assured me, that "his only object was to make his report full and efficient, and that I was in honourable hands." But I did not feel confident upon this point.—I had observed a want of frankness in his conduct, and he would not reply by letter to any of my numerous applications to him; I therefore declined to part with the secret of the invention, and he refused to make any report until he got it.

The next step which I took was to write to Lord Monteagle, and stated Mr. Warburton's request and my motive for not acceding to it, to that letter his lordship never replied, and nothing further transpired till April following, when I was advised by Sir George Sinclair, notwithstanding the doubts which I entertained of the good faith of Mr. Warburton, to entrust the secret of the invention to him, as without his support, so said Sir George, it was not probable the Government would adopt it.

Acting under this advice I consented to put Mr. Warburton in possession of the secret of the process, and at his request I wrote to Lord Monteagle, stating my intention. This I considered as a guarantee, that his Lordship was a party to the transaction. Mr. Warburton told me he could not then find time to receive the details of my invention, and nothing further was done until the following July, when I complained to him that the result of his procrastination was to aid a combination called the Anatomical Committee. I submitted to him



the necessity for bringing my negotiation with the Government to a conclusion, but I found he still evaded the settlement; I then told him I considered it a duty that I owed to the public, as well as myself, to inform certain parish boards which supplied pauper's bodies for anatomical purposes, that the subjects so supplied were not exclusively applied to serve the interest of science, but were in particular instances made a source of private emolument and patronage. To prevent the possibility of mistake, I gave him a copy of the hand-bill which I subsequently distributed (exclusively) to the members of Parish Boards. The paper in question displeased Mr. Warburton, and he wrote to Sir George Sinclair expressing his disapprobation. Sir George wrote to me as follows:

“Mr. Wm. Roberts,

“Thurso Castle, Sept. 6th, 1837.

“SIR,—Mr. Warburton wrote to me on the subject of your hand-bill, and I have been too long in answering his letter, but have done so now and endeavoured to deprecate his displeasure. I don't expect to be in London before the meeting of Parliament, but if you have not settled matters before then I will endeavour to serve you if possible. I expect however, as I have often said, that you will not succeed with the Government unless Mr. W. pleads your cause, at least I think so.

(Signed)

“GEORGE SINCLAIR.”

Nothing further transpired until Sir George Sinclair returned to London. Sir George had advised me to apologize to Mr. Warburton and Lord Monteagle for any expression that I might have used, in consequence of the long delay which had occurred in bringing the negotiation to a termination; and although I did not know that I had any thing to apologize for, I complied with Sir George's wish and wrote both to Lord Monteagle and Mr. Warburton, and in November, by arrangement with Sir George and Mr. Warburton, I gave them a full detail of the secret, as to the materials and application of my invention. Mr. Warburton then assured me he would make his report, and I might expect a reply in about ten days. In December he stated he was trying experiments, but was satisfied they would prove successful, and that during the Christmas holidays he would make his report to Lord Monteagle.

I then placed before him two notices which I had received from the Patent Office, stating that applications had been made for patents to preserve animal substances; I urged upon his attention the unfairness of keeping me in a state of suspense for so long a period; he answered my observations by saying, that "the Government having authorised him to make his report, my putting the secret of the invention into his hands to enable him to make his report complete, Government were bound in honour to compensate me even if twenty patents were obtained."

In January, 1838, I received a letter from Sir George Sinclair, stating that Mr. Warburton would immediately make his report in favor of my invention to Lord Monteagle; a few days later, Mr. Warburton told me Lord Monteagle was pleased with his report, and only required a short time to search into precedents for making private grants. On the 2nd February, 1838, Sir George Sinclair wrote as follows:

"SIR,—I fear that a letter which I wrote you some time ago must have miscarried. I then intimated to you Mr. Warburton's opinion, that from the simplicity of your invention a patent would be useless, that he thought so favorably of it as to be willing that it should have a fair trial, that he was prepared to recommend that Government should pay to you one thousand pounds for revealing the process, and a further sum of two thousand pounds if on trial it should meet with general approbation and adoption. I earnestly advise you to close with this proposal.

(Signed) "Yours truly, GEORGE SINCLAIR."

I neither accepted or refused this offer—it was at variance with the original agreement—but waited for a direct communication from the Government, when I was surprised by the receipt of the following letter from Mr. Warburton.

"Mr. Wm. Roberts,

"April 9th, 1838.

"SIR,—I am sorry to inform you that I have received a letter from the Home Office, stating that the Chancellor of the Exchequer having referred to that office the question of remunerating you for your discovery of a method of preserving animal substances from putre-



faction, Lord John Russell has declined recommending a grant of public money for that purpose. I was not aware until I received this communication that the matter had been so referred. I should *conjecture that it is the representations of gentlemen who are opposed to summer teaching that have prevailed against you.*

I have informed Sir George Sinclair of the result of this application.

(Signed) "HENRY WARBURTON."

On receipt of this letter I applied to Mr. Warburton to explain the reason why he made his report to Lord Monteagle, and why his Lordship received it? His reply was "he is the only man of science in the Cabinet." I then solicited him to make a statement of the whole of the facts to Lord John Russell; he said that would be useless, "as Ministers of State always protected each others actions in such matters."

I applied to Sir George Sinclair to bring the matter before the House of Commons, and got the following reply:—

"Mr. Wm. Roberts,

"May 14th, 1838.

"SIR,—After the best consideration which I can give to the subject, I regret that I must positively decline to bring the subject of your invention before the House. If you can get any other member to do so, and he succeeds in obtaining a committee, you might summon Mr. Warburton and myself as witnesses to attest the simplicity and efficacy of your plan. I really do not take any blame to myself for the failure of the attempt to obtain for you remuneration from the Government. I have neither time nor health to prosecute the matter any further, and hope you will be able to get it taken up in some more influential quarter.

(Signed) "GEORGE SINCLAIR."

Not being able to succeed with Sir George, I addressed Viscount Melbourne as head of the Government, and he sent me from one office to another, and all the answers I got were formal notes, declining to interfere. The late Dr. Birkbeck took great interest in promoting the application of my invention, and he at different times wrote to Lord Monteagle on the subject; he was aware of the undue influence Mr. Henry Warburton exercised over the Government at that period,



and he did what he could to check it. The following is Lord Monteagle's reply to one of the Doctor's letters.

“ Downing Street, Oct. 23, 1838.

“ My dear Sir,—On the subject of Mr. Roberts' invention, I have more than once stated, that the Treasury would not undertake to propose a vote for that gentleman's remuneration, unless the Secretary-of-State should recommend it for our favorable consideration. Lord John Russell has the superintendence of the practical working of the Anatomy Bill, his office is in close communication with the high medical and surgical authorities.

“ My first reference to Mr. Warburton was for the purpose of knowing from one whose abilities and attention had long been directed to this subject, much to his honour, and greatly to the advantage of the public, whether this invention was one of real importance, or only one of the many clap-traps of the day.

“ On learning Mr. Warburton's second opinion, I then considered myself justified in desiring that the matter should be considered by the Home Secretary ; for an invention may be meritorious and ingenious without being a fit subject for reward at the public expence. I must therefore await an expression of opinion from Lord John Russell before I should feel warranted in taking any further steps on the subject.

“ Believe me, my dear Sir,

“Very faithfully yours,

“ T. SPRING RICE.”

“ Dr. Birkbeck, 38, Finsbury Square.”

It is a singular fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have so praised Mr. Warburton. When I had my preparation of subjects at Guy's Hospital, I invited Mr. Warburton, but he gave me to understand that he had not moral courage to come and inspect them. At his request I preserved a rabbit for him to look at.—About the same time he declared his inability to examine a medical witness at the bar of the House of Commons. I have never heard that Mr. Warburton has ever distinguished himself by any scientific attainment ; yet when Lord John Russell was Home Secretary this gentleman was the oracle on medical subjects.

About the time Lord Monteagle wrote his letter a great party struggle was going on between the Conservatives and the Whigs, and Mr. Warburton was at that period considered the leader of a few gentlemen, who had frequently the power of turning the majorities at their pleasure. I presume that the Chancellor of the Exchequer intended to express his gratitude in the name of the Government, instead of the Public, to Mr. Warburton for his assistance in keeping them in office. The harmony of these gentlemen was disturbed for a short time: for, on March 3rd, 1838, Sir George Sinclair informed me, that the settlement of my case was postponed, in consequence of "Mr. T. S. Rice and Mr. Warburton not being quite as one." I understood that Mr. Warburton had supported a motion of Sir William Molesworth's which the Government considered too radical.

Instead of the public having reason to be grateful to Mr. Warburton, they have strong grounds for dissatisfaction. He is the admitted fosterfather of an act of parliament morally debasing, because it is a mass of fraud and deception. It is a matter of notoriety that he has applied the act to advance the pecuniary interests of himself and friends, and that by a traffic in the dead bodies of the destitute poor.

Lord Monteagle has never attempted to explain why he took upon himself to direct Mr. Warburton to obtain the secret of my invention, and thereby my property, in the name of the Government! when he admits it was not in his department. As to the grant of public money *no grant was required*, the saving of burial fees would more than pay my claim and leave a considerable surplus for the exchequer.

In October, 1838, I wrote to Lord Monteagle, and submitted for his consideration the deep injury he had done me, and solicited him to place the facts in a favorable light before Lord John Russell—I received the following reply:—

(Extract)

“Downing Street, Oct. 29th, 1838.

“Sir,—I consider it to be rather the business of the inventor, than mine, to make out his case and his claim before Lord John Russell. On these grounds you will perceive that no object can be gained by your continuing a correspondence with me.

“I am Sir, yours very faithfully,

“Mr. Wm. Roberts.

“T. SPRING RICE.”



In the parliamentary session of 1840, I succeeded in inducing Mr. Fitzstephen French, M.P. for Roscommon, to bring the subject before the House, and he moved the following petition should be printed with the votes, it was printed accordingly.

---

*The humble Petition of William Roberts, of the City of London,*

SHEWETH—

That your Petitioner is the inventor of a process for keeping subjects intended for anatomical purposes, in a natural, fresh, and moist state, free from decomposition, for months, and, if required, for an indefinite period.

That your Petitioner's invention would prevent the loss of students' lives from the infection of animal poison, and also prevent destruction of health occasioned by the unwholesome atmosphere of dissecting rooms.

That your Petitioner's process would remove the present difficulties which the profession have to encounter from the deficiency of material, as one preserved subject would give more anatomical knowledge than is now obtained from five subjects allowed to decompose in the ordinary course of nature. It would also afford the means for summer dissection, which is an important consideration.

That your Petitioner, at the request of the leading Anatomists in London, applied, through Mr. Warburton, M.P. to the Government, in March 1836, to adopt your Petitioner's invention, for the purpose of remedying the evils occasioned by the defects of the present Anatomy Act (under the control of the Secretary-of-State for the Home Department.)

That your Petitioner was informed by Mr. Warburton, in February 1837, that "the Chancellor of Exchequer considered the invention of great importance, and had in consequence desired him to make a report as to its completeness." Mr. Warburton then informed your Petitioner, that the only terms upon which he would consent to make a report, were, that your Petitioner should put him confidentially in possession of the secret of the process. Your Petitioner did so impart to Mr. Warburton the process; and was assured by him, if the invention was found to be complete, that the Government were bound in honour to remunerate your Petitioner.

That your Petitioner was informed by Mr. Warburton, in January 1838, that he had made a favorable report to the Chancellor of Exchequer, and recommended that your Petitioner should receive compensation. And he added, that "the Chancellor of Exchequer only desired a few days to search into precedents for making private grants"

That your Petitioner received a letter from Mr. Warburton, in April 1838, stating, that "unknown to him, the Chancellor of Exchequer had transmitted your Petitioner's papers to Lord John Russell; and that, gentleman opposed to summer dissection had prevailed against your Petitioner."

That your Petitioner could have used his invention as a secret process, had it not been communicated to Mr. Warburton, but the benefit to your Petitioner has been destroyed through Mr. Warburton having had the invention imparted to him, upon the faith, that the Government desired to be satisfied as to its completeness.

That your Petitioner submits, that the Government should not have authorized a Report, unless they intended to make the invention available for public benefit. Your Petitioner is deeply injured by the course complained of, as your Petitioner devoted much time, at considerable hazard to his life, and also incurred a large expenditure, in completing his invention.

That your Petitioner submits, that in consequence of the public objection against dissection, all reasonable means should be used to prevent disgust, or unnecessary waste of subjects.

That your Petitioner is prepared to prove before your honourable House, that the Anatomy Act is valueless, either as to its protection to the public against murder, or to its capabilities to supply the wants of the profession; and that your Petitioner's invention would give the security which the public interest demands; and the means which the profession require to obtain legal anatomical knowledge.

That the said Act only refers to entire subjects; parts of subjects are in no way protected by the Act. Your Petitioner knows that parts of subjects are sold, independent of the restrictions of the said Act.

That the Inspector, who is paid out of the public purse, has either neglected his duty, or connived at the contravention of the said Act.

That the said Act provides for three Inspectors, but only one,



(Dr. Somerville) does the duty. This arrangement gives facility for the operation of partisanship.

That the said Act is so framed, that the Inspector can destroy its operation whenever it suits his convenience. The Inspector has also the power to keep anatomical teachers, who are not in his favour, without subjects at a time they are most required.

That your Memorialist humbly submits to your honourable House, that there are between fifteen hundred and two thousand pupils, thirsting to become proficient in their anatomical studies, who are suffering all the evils of empirical instead of practical knowledge; evils alike destructive to their own happiness and the welfare of the community.

Your Petitioner therefore humbly prays :

That your honourable House will institute a rigid inquiry as to the motives why your Petitioner has been so unfairly treated ;

That unnecessary waste of pauper's remains may be avoided ;

That the health and lives of anatomical students may receive favourable consideration ;

That the contravention of the Anatomy Act be discontinued ;

That proper Inspectors of the said Act be recommended ;

That the importance of your Petitioner's invention may be fully investigated, and that your honourable House will adopt such measures as appear in your wisdom requisite, to attain the aforesaid objects.

And your Petitioner, as in duty bound, will ever pray,

WILLIAM ROBERTS.

When the discussion came on, Mr. Warburton and the Government appeared in strong force to oppose the appointment of a Committee. Mr. Fox Maule (now Earl Panmure, then Under Home Secretary) said I had attacked the Government ; Lord John Russell spoke against enquiry, and Mr. Henry Warburton, who had given so many assurances to Sir George Sinclair and myself of his interest and determination to support my invention, rose in his place as a legislator and read the paper I published in July, 1837, stating that its publication deprived me of all claim to sympathy—"Yes" said the

*honorable* member, "were such a man to discover the philosopher's stone, he would not be entitled to consideration." The Government had a majority, and the enquiry was refused.

I may here observe that a snug monopoly had long been in the possession of the loudest professors of free trade principles. The Anatomy Act is the monopoly I refer to, and the only principle the monopolists have adhered to, has been to enrich themselves, regardless of the interests of the community.

It is well known that University College was brought into existence as a great political, and at the same time, a great mercantile speculation, and that its infancy was marked by great decrepitude; strong efforts were made through its school of medicine to resuscitate its dying frame, and the Anatomy Act was concocted to feed it with pauper bodies. The value of the dead was the amount of the gold they brought in the shape of pupils' fees to the infant. The experiment proved successful, for in six years from the passing of the Anatomy Act University College got a School of Anatomy equal to about four of the largest and oldest Hospital Schools in London conjointly, and a revenue from that source of from £12,000 to £14,000 per annum. This success was accomplished by the aid of the Government Inspector, Dr. Somerville, who gave to University College an undue supply of dead bodies, at the same time depriving other schools of a fair share. The private schools were too weak for the contest, and their pupils were obliged to seek entrance at University College, or any where else, to obtain the means of dissecting. Before the passing of the Anatomy Bill there were about thirteen of these private schools in London; they successfully competed for a living with the Hospital Schools, and were conducted with ability by gentlemen who had not the advantage of obtaining Hospital patronage.

They educated young men at lower fees than the Hospitals charged and those students passed their examinations before the same boards. These private schools might be considered free traders in Anatomical Science, but when Mr. Warburton brought his Anatomy Bill to work, he, with Dr. Somerville's assistance, overwhelmed the private schools, so that only about one, if one, now exists. The Hospitals suffered more or less, but the influence of the authorities in those large institutions, enabled them more successfully to bear up against



the common enemy, and they were to some extent interested in the fall of the private schools. Mr. Partridge, of King's College, indeed told me they should do no good till these private schools were closed.

Mr. Henry Warburton has made patent his own conduct. In February, 1837, he told me the Government had authorised him to make a report of the completeness of my invention, and they wanted to be satisfied that the materials used were "cheap, innocuous, and easy of application." In July 1837, he admitted to Sir George Sinclair the receipt of a hand-bill which I had circulated. In November, 1837, he obtained the secret of my invention in the name of the Government. In April, 1840, he read the said hand-bill in the House of Commons, and declared the publication of that paper deprived me of all sympathy; now, if this was Mr. Henry Warburton's opinion, he must have obtained the secret of my invention under false pretences. I had stated to Mr. Warburton that I had an offer to connect myself with a private school for the exclusive use of my invention, and had such an engagement been completed, it might have materially injured University College School; I can, therefore, understand his desire to get the secret of the invention, and thereby make it of little or no value to any other school. It is a singular coincidence in this case, that Lord John Russell, Lord Monteagle, and Mr. Warburton, were about this time, members of the council of University College, that is of its governing body.

Of the Teachers of Anatomy who introduced me to the Government, I will say but a few words here: I briefly remark that they led me to apply to the Government, and while the negociation was going on, some of them entered into a combination to prevent the introduction of the invention they had professed to feel so much interest in.

The letter before quoted, addressed to me by Mr. Warburton, on April 9th, 1838, was artfully calculated to remove suspicions from himself and to throw all the blame on Lord John Russell, and the Teachers of Anatomy.

The real objection to my invention rested on its application being calculated to interfere with that fraudulent working of the Anatomy Act, whereby the emoluments of University College School of Anatomy were increased; an undue supply of subjects being afforded

it. Mr. Warburton was, at this date, a sort of Under Secretary-of State on medical matters, and the Government Inspector of Schools of Anatomy, Dr. Somerville was a mere instrument at his disposal. It would have been impossible for Dr. Somerville or Mr. Warburton to have obstructed the application of my invention without obtaining the co-operation of the Teachers of Anatomy; to attain that object, on the 19th September, 1836, Dr. Somerville issued the following circular to the Teachers in London, offering an *equal* distribution of bodies to each school.

“5, Saville Row, 19th Sept., 1836.

*School of Medicine.*

“Dear Sir,—I feel it my duty, on the approach of another season, to call your attention to some circumstances in the operation of the Anatomy Act, and to express my great anxiety that by your zealous co-operation the difficulties which have hitherto occurred may be avoided.

“The number of bodies received for Anatomical examination in London, during the session 1835-36, amounts to about 600. There has never existed a doubt in my mind, that were some of the Teachers to *unite their exertions with the inspector* for the purpose of carrying into effect the regulations established by the Secretary-of-State, solely for the advantage of the Schools, an increase would result to the supply far exceeding the increasing demand.

“To ensure this desirable object, I shall be happy to confer with you at any time you may appoint, to concert the best means of *overcoming the difficulties* which still *exist in some of the parishes*.

“As it has ever been an object of the first importance that the bodies should be distributed to the Schools, *according to the just claims of each*, I need not assure you of my anxiety to promote any scheme which you can suggest to further this end, and I shall be obliged by your communicating it to me as early as convenient, that it may be submitted to the consideration of Lord John Russell.

(Signed)

“JAMES C. SOMERVILLE.”

The Teachers complied with Dr. Somerville's suggestion, and the association called “The Anatomical Committee” was constituted, with Mr. Stanley as chairman, and Mr. Partridge as treasurer and secretary.



In consequence of disputes among themselves, one of the committee retired, and as he was one of the private school Teachers who considered he had not an equal supply of subjects, he gave me several of the circulars of the committee; the following copy of one I particularly recommend to the notice of Parish Boards, as it shows how those Teachers calculate on their influence with those Boards.

“ *December 22nd, 1837.*

“ SIR,—We beg to submit for your consideration the enclosed plan for obtaining a better supply of subjects for the Anatomical Schools; the plan will be laid before the next general meeting of the Teachers of Anatomy, which will be held at the Freemason’s Tavern, on Wednesday, 10th of January, at 8 o’clock, p.m., precisely, when the favor of your attendance is particularly desired.

“ The general meeting will elect two new members of the committee.

We remain, Sir,

Your obedient servants,

“ SAML. LANE, EDWARD STANLEY,

“ J. G. SMITH, RICHARD PARTRIDGE.

“ *To the Teacher of Anatomy  
in the School of —*

“ 1stly —That the Bill is well calculated to effect the important purposes for which it was framed, but that in order to obtain the full advantage to be derived from it, an improvement in the working of some of its details is absolutely required.

“ 2ndly.—That the Act not being compulsory on the Parishes, or other sources of supply, to give up the unclaimed bodies for the purposes of dissection, greater personal activity and superintendence than have hitherto been exerted are necessary to remove the numerous obstacles that have been found to present themselves.

“ 3rdly.—That it appears impossible for the Inspector and his assistant to make the required personal application, or to exert sufficient influence in the several Parishes of London to ensure the full amount of supply each Parish is capable of affording.

“ 4thly.—That it is desirable to bring into immediate operation, in many of the Parishes in London, the personal exertion and influence of the Teacher, in a way that would directly benefit his individual

supply without interfering with that of any other School, or in any way departing from the acknowledged principle of *equitable* distribution which your Committee submit is not maintained under the present arrangement.

“Your Committee beg to remark, that on reference to the return of the numbers of bodies supplied each year under the Act, there has been a gradual decrease since the first year, when, it will be remembered, the Teachers depended solely upon their own exertions in the several Parishes. With regard to the last year, there was a slight advance on account of the increased mortality from Influenza.

“In accordance with the foregoing opinions, your Committee are induced to lay before the general body of Teachers of Anatomy the following sketch of a plan which appears to them calculated to remove many of the difficulties that have hitherto impeded the efficient working of the Anatomical Bill, at the same time that it avoids the risk of throwing open the Parishes to a fresh canvas.

“*Plan suggested by the Committee of the Anatomical Teachers.*

“1st.—That the Parishes, Hospitals, and other sources at present giving up their unclaimed bodies, be divided equally among the Schools in proportion to the number of their Students and their respective wants.

“2nd.—That the superintendence and working of the Parishes, Hospitals, &c., be intrusted to the particular Teacher to whom they have been allotted, and that he be accountable for the same (through the Committee) to the general body of Teachers.

“3rd.—That the Inspector be authorised to retain the Government sources of supply, and a few Parishes for the purpose of assisting any Teacher whose supply may be insufficient, and in order to equalize the distribution.

“4th.—That in the allotment of Parishes due attention be paid to the wishes of Governors of Hospitals, and the Directors of Parishes, in reference to particular Schools; also to the influence Teachers may be known to possess in certain localities, and that the sources of supply be arranged as near to the School as possible.

“5th.—That no Teacher shall interfere with the arrangement of a Hospital or Parish allotted to another, and that all differences be referred to the Committee elected from the general body of Teachers.



“6th.—That a Committee of four Teachers be elected for *allotting the Parishes*, subject to an annual re-election, for the purpose of revising the allotment previous to the commencement of each session.

“7th.—That any Teacher, having the *sanction* so to do from the Committee, may *exert himself to obtain the unclaimed bodies from any new Parish, and that should he succeed, he be allowed to retain such Parish one year.* Afterwards to be decided by the Committee.

“8th.—That in case the supply of any Teacher from the Parishes allotted to him be more than he requires, the surplus be given up to the Inspector for general distribution.

“Your Committee beg to observe, that the working of the above plan would require no alteration at the Parish Boards or at the office of the Inspector. The notice would be sent as usual from the Parish to the Inspector, who would direct the body to the *particular* School to which the said *Parish was allotted.*”

The fourth clause of this circular refers to the *personal influence* of the Teacher with a *Parish* in a way that would *directly benefit that Teacher's individual supply*, and the Committee give the Government official a broad hint as to the inequitable distribution then in practice.

The sixth clause dispenses with the official services of Dr. Somerville in distributing subjects, and vests the duty in the Anatomical Committee, except that by clause eight the Inspector is permitted to have the disposal of what they might not want. A pretty plain declaration that they considered the Government official as an instrument at their command.

The reader will perceive that the Teachers here deal with the subject of pauper bodies as so many chattels intended to serve their purpose. At the time they were exerting themselves so strenuously to get more subjects, they knew that what they had, were to a great extent wasted.

With Mr. Jos. Hy. Green, one of the Council of the College of Surgeons, I have had no other communication than with other leading Anatomists; now, probably, it would not be speaking to the disparagement of others to say, that he is the most distinguished member of the College. This gentleman, after he had honored me

with several visits for the purpose of examining my preparation, gave me in writing his opinion as follows:—

“ 46, *Lincoln's Inn Fields*, March 21st, 1836.

“SIR,—In reply to your enquiry respecting the results of your antiseptic process and its probable advantages, I beg to say, that I cannot doubt that its general use will render the number of subjects available for the purposes of dissection, and *the regularity of the supply, by far greater than at present*; since without the means of preservation in a state fitted for anatomical purposes (*which your plan alone offers*) many subjects must be completely *lost and wasted*. I cannot therefore but regard your process, if it can be carried on at a moderate expence, as a most *valuable aid* to the *beneficial operation* of the Anatomy Bill. I may add, that the parts preserved appear to me in *as perfect a condition for dissection* as in the recent state.

(Signed)

“JOSH. HY. GREEN.”

“To Mr. WM. ROBERTS.”

I hope, some day, to induce the Anatomical Committee to explain to the public why the remains of the dead are *lost and wasted* in Schools of Anatomy; and why they desire to extend that loss by obtaining a larger supply of paupers' bodies.

I have two documents before me, both connected with University College. The first is an account copied from the Master's book of Marylebone Workhouse for fifty-two paupers' bodies, charged to Dr. Somerville, of these bodies the authorities got back forty-six shells for interment, and no entry as to the return of the remaining six; these last were clandestinely got out of the Workhouse and not returned, but eventually traced to Dr. Somerville, and thence to University College. This is a worse case than that of exhuming.

Entry of payment from Master's cash book—

“*Dr. Somerville, Saville Row,*

“Burial Fees for eighteen Paupers, at 2/6 ..... £2 5 0

“*Note—This is the only payment.*”

From this document it appears that Dr. Somerville added to his official duties that of Assistant Paymaster for University College.



The second document is a copy of charges to Students at University College for pauper bodies described as divided into eight parts, called, head and neck, right and left upper extremities, abdomen, right and left lower extremities, together, £3 10s. for each pauper's body.

"Sale of 52 bodies, at 70/- each .....	£182 0 0
"Cost of 52 bodies, at 2/6 each .....	£6 10 0"
	<hr/>
Profit on this Parish lot .....	£175 10 0

If the paupers in Marylebone, St. Giles and St. George's Bloomsbury, St. George's Hanover Square, Holborn Union Workhouse, and some other Parishes which have supplied, since the Anatomy Act came into operation, to the Schools of Anatomy in London, their 12,000 subjects, knew that a number of joint-stock proprietors, medical men, and others, would realize about £36,000 by their bodies, they would have entertained a high opinion of their own mercantile value.

I am fully convinced that it is not necessary to dissect *any* pauper bodies. The prisons would supply, by the adoption of my plan, much more efficient means than those now in use to obtain a knowledge of anatomy.

The offer made to me by Sir James Graham, in August 1842, to submit to a secret investigation before the College of Surgeons, was an admission that he had no great faith in the validity of his own statement made in the House of Commons on July 17, 1842, when he opposed the appointment of a committee to enquire into the statements contained in my petition. That speech (see *Times* 18 July 1842) showed that he had placed too much reliance on the statements of Sir Benjamin Brodie, Mr. Stanley, and others, and by so doing had dealt unjustly, both towards myself and my invention.

I looked upon the offer made to me by Sir James Graham as a contrivance to get rid of my importunities for a fair and open investigation into the whole matter. He knew that some active members of the Council of the College of Surgeons were strongly opposed to the introduction of my process. The College had had the subject formally before them in 1836, I had received the following letter :—

“College of Surgeons, April 21st, 1836.

“Sir,—I am directed by the Chairman of the Board of Curators of the Museum of this College, to request the favor of your attendance at a meeting of the Board on Saturday next at 3 o'clock; and that you will bring with you some of the fluid used in your antiseptic process, together with any soft parts which have been preserved in it, and any matter which in your opinion may tend to prove the efficiency of the process.

(Signed)

“C. BALFOUR.”

“To Mr. W. Roberts.”

I attended as invited with a large number of specimens which were taken into the board-room, and I was shown into Mr. Balfour's office, where I was detained for upwards of two hours, when Mr. Owen, then assistant curator, (now Professor Owen) told me I might take my preparations away as the Board had examined them and broken up. I enquired if they had left any message for me, the reply was in the negative, and although I subsequently made about twenty applications personally, and by letter, from that day to this, I have never got an answer.

The College in its official capacity was, it is clear, in a dilemma, had they asserted that the specimens showed a failure, I might have publicly exhibited them to prove the statement unfounded—had they admitted the value of them they would have given countenance to the adoption of the process.

Taking this fact in connection with others, on the part of some of the Council, I considered it at the time a duty to withhold my consent to any but an open enquiry.

But this is not merely a question between the Government and myself, it embraces the question whether the law is to be worked so as to enrich a favored class or school; therefore, the *administration of the Anatomy Act* ought to be taken into consideration, whenever an enquiry takes place into the value of my invention. Sir James in his speech stated, that it was mainly through Mr. H. Warburton's exertions that the Anatomy Act was passed; he then went on to say, “*he could not dissemble from the House that two or three of the enactments of the Anatomy Act had not been complied with,*” These two or three enactments comprise all the material sections of the



Act. The Act has been administered in fraud; and if its history in connection with University College be fairly traced I cannot doubt every intelligent mind would be satisfied, that it was introduced for the special benefit of that Institution.

As to the contraventions of the Anatomy Bill, I have a letter before me dated Dec. 12, 1840, written by a Professor in a School of Anatomy, referring to some human bones, with a section of a head and neck, found at his house by Dr. Somerville, and for which a certificate of interment had been given; the writer goes on to say—"In consequence of my understanding from the bearing of Dr. Somerville's conduct at the time, that he intended to report the case to the Home Office, I explained to him the length of time the bones had been in my possession, and the grounds upon which I had detained the *post-mortem relic*, a *thing commonly done in every school*; as proved, if *only by the prize dissections*; upon his departing he asked my servant his name, since then I have heard no more." This case is a fair specimen of the value of Dr. Somerville's official services. He had great power to assist a favored school, and also to injure those he desired to see crushed. He was a servant of the public, and public interests alone ought to have been his object. In proof of the necessity of an enquiry into the contraventions of the Act, I could enumerate a host of cases, but I will not disgust the reader by a recital of the more horrible facts which have come to my knowledge. The Master of Holborn Union Workhouse, Mr. Hewitt, who was the chief "Government Undertaker," had an ingenious way of deceiving some of the Guardians of that Union:—When a pauper died whose body he could turn to profit by taking it to the School of Anatomy, he wrote in the margin of the official book of the Union, recording the death of paupers, "*buried by friends*," by this means he turned a very large number of paupers' bodies into money. A gentleman connected with a large West-end Parish, which sent paupers' bodies to Schools of Anatomy, asked the contracting undertaker, how he managed to bury the paupers at so small a charge, he replied by saying, that he got his profit out of the bodies he took to Schools of Anatomy. I may here remark that Mr. ——— handed for my inspection a bundle of Hewitt's bills, of charges made to him for interring dissected remains, and not one was less than 42s., and for Government subjects carted from the Dock

Yards, as high as 85s., whereas Hewitt was burying hundreds of bodies at Globe Fields for 6s. 6d. and 7s. 6d. each.

I know of another Parish from whence paupers have been sent by a workhouse official to Schools of Anatomy in numbers far exceeding a probable proportion of unclaimed bodies; and I discovered that certain Teachers of Anatomy had presented this official with a gold snuff box in consideration of bodies so sent. In fact a system of affording pecuniary advantages to persons who have had to do with subjects for dissection, has been carried out, from the pauper who carried the body, up to the wealthy shareholders in the Schools of Anatomy.

Having stated thus much, I will now enumerate some of the obstructions that have been thrown in the way to prevent enquiry into the working of the Anatomy Act.

1st.—Mr. French, in April, 1840, gave notice in the House of Commons of his intention to move for a Committee to investigate the allegations contained in my petition. A cabinet minister applied to Mr. French to abandon my case—which to his honour he refused to do—and informed me of the proposal which had been made to him. It was when this discussion came on that Mr. Warburton alleged the objection as to the hand-bill, the futility of that objection I have shown elsewhere.

2nd.—A Commission was appointed by the Home Office, in 1840, to investigate the working of the Anatomy Bill.—Mr. Warburton, the most improper man, excepting Dr. Somerville, who could have been appointed, in consequence of his interest in the Act, was named chairman, Mr. Benjamin Hawes, M.P. for Lambeth, a Mr. Gore and a Mr. Byng, two Government officials, were its other members. I applied to the Commissioners to receive my evidence, but they refused to do so. I then informed them that as it was their duty to take it, I would add it as an appendix to their report. I believe up to this date no report has been made. I have always looked upon the appointment of this Commission as a device to stifle enquiry in the House of Commons; for when anything was said in the House, the official reply was, “we have appointed a Commission.”

3rd.—On the 20th May, 1841, Mr. Maclean, M.P. for Oxford, gave notice for the following return, which address to the Crown Government agreed to. In fact a part of it they could not have refused, because the Act provides that certain returns shall be made.



“A return of the number of Inspectors appointed under the Anatomy Act, &c., &c.”

“Of the amount of salary paid to each Inspector, and allowance for travelling expences in each year, from 1836 to 1840 inclusive.”

“Of the number of visits made by each Inspector to the several Schools of Anatomy within his district, from 1836 to 1840 inclusive.”

“Of the number of Reports to the Home Office, of all contraventions of the Anatomy Act, by Teachers, or Students, from 1833 to 1840 inclusive; and also the result of any proceedings which have been taken thereon.”

I believe that up to this day no returns have been laid on the table of the House. It has been stated that had these returns been made, it would have shown that large sums of the public money have been drawn from the consolidated fund, and not accounted for as required by the sixth section of the Anatomy Act.

4th.—Sir James Graham wrote to me in 1841, that, if I would make, in writing, specific charges against Dr. Somerville, he, Sir James, would appoint a Commission to investigate them. I took the legal responsibility of the transaction, and alledged many facts against Dr. Somerville's official conduct; Sir James appointed Mr. J. H. Green and Mr. Rogers, the Commisioners; but I had no notice from Sir James, or any other official authority, of the appointment, and only heard of it by chance; I was told, indeed, as I had been when Mr. Warburton's Commission sat, that considerable abuse was heaped upon me; this Commission also, closed without receiving my evidence. The Commissioners made a report which Sir James refused to lay before Parliament, although it refers to an act of the legislature;—but Sir James considered it his duty to dismiss Dr. Somerville from his appointment.

5th.—Mr. Hardy, M.P. for Bradford, in June, 1842, gave notice in the House of his intention to move for a Committee to investigate the allegations contained in my petition. Sir James Graham privately applied to Mr. Hardy to give up his intention; I had to thank him for refusing compliance with Sir James's request; the subject was discussed in the House, and the statements were made by Sir James of which I have so strong reason to complain.

There is something very much at variance with honorable dealing in this part of Sir James's conduct. I had complained that I had

met with treatment morally as bad as highway robbery, and prayed for fair and open investigation. I had not been desirous of pressing the subject on the House of Commons; I had merely done so because the Government would not even allow me the opportunity to prove my case before a competent tribunal. The evident intention has been to crush me by the weight of official power.

6th.—Mr. T. Duncombe, on the 20th December, 1852, gave notice of an address to the Crown, which the Government did not oppose, it was in substance the same as Mr. Maclean's in 1840, with the addition of requiring a copy of report of each of the two Commissions before referred to, to be laid before Parliament. I believe, up to this day, those returns have not been laid on the table of the House.

Had the reports of the two Commissions, and the returns agreed to, been furnished, they would have proved more against the working of the Anatomy Act than anything I have advanced. As these documents refer to an Act of the Legislature, they ought not to be withheld; they are public property.

If these documents had invalidated my statements, they would, no doubt, have been produced; but as they would have established my assertions they have been withheld.

When I found all my attempts to obtain investigation were frustrated, I applied to Sir James Graham, in September, 1842, to give me an order to obtain a number of subjects for the purpose of publicly proving the completeness of my invention. On the 20th Sept., 1842, Sir James replied by stating, that "he must decline to give the order which you request." Thus the use of my invention was suppressed by the Government.

It will not be saying too much to observe, that had the Anatomy Act interfered with any other class than the poor and friendless, it would not have been tolerated; and it is a question for grave consideration whether it is not against public policy to have upon the statute book an Act of Parliament such as this. In these days, when the poor and ignorant are expected to practise a larger amount of morality than was demanded of them in past times, it would be well that their superiors should set them a good example. The hackneyed excuse against inquiry, "*the delicacy of the subject*," is a subterfuge to evade investigation. If the Anatomy Act be so delicate a question that the public cannot be allowed to know how it is administered, the



reason is tenfold stronger why the parties entrusted with its working should not have converted it to political and pecuniary purposes. If Lord John Russell, when Home Secretary, in 1836, had, instead of making a partisan job of this subject, given, as a just judge would have done, the matter a fair hearing, his present colleague, Sir James Graham, would not have been compelled in 1842 to admit in the House of Commons, that "he would not dissemble from the House that two or three of the enactments of the Anatomy Act had not been complied with," which two or three enactments are the essence of the Act. The great sacrifice of life and health in Schools of Anatomy might have been avoided, much of the pauper's dread against being dissected might have been removed, the public would now have had a class of medical men better acquainted than in past time with the structure of the human frame, and the disgrace of having an Act of Parliament illegally administered would have been obviated.

I may add, that my greatest personal complaint is, that the connivance of Lord John Russell in the illegal operation of the Anatomy Bill, has prevented the introduction of my process, and, therefore, myself of remuneration.

In making these remarks, I do not wish it to be understood that Lord John Russell was a party to Mr. Warburton's deceptions, and equivocal as Lord Monteagle's conduct appears, I wish to give him the benefit of the doubt, but this, I do without hesitation believe, that the connection between Lord John Russell and University College was such, that certain active supporters of the College had in this matter sufficient influence at the Home Office to pervert the course of justice.

I have been charged by a past Government with attacking it; all I can say is, that I have not, as the history of the case will prove, desired to obtrude myself on the notice of the public; whatever I have done has been done to save myself from being ruined by intrigue and party influence. This question is purely a business matter with me. I know no difference between Whig, Conservative, or Radical Governments.

It is a duty I owe to myself (as Lord Monteagle observes), and a duty I owe to society, to do every legal act within my power to pursue this subject until justice be done; and in a commercial country like England it is incumbent on the Government to act fairly, not to say liberally, towards all Her Majesty's subjects.

As for the paper I circulated, it was, only in different words, to the same effect as Sir James Graham's statement, that the Anatomy Act had been contravened. But when Sir James opposed my petition he took other ground for his opposition, namely, the complete failure of my invention; and the reader will see (*Appendix*) that Lord Palmerston had urged a different objection, namely, the staleness of the matter—a thing beyond my control.\*

The reader will observe that in my writing to Lord Monteagle, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, by Mr. Warburton's request, and also from the letter written by Lord M. to Dr. Birkbeck, that it is clearly shown that Mr. Warburton was the recognised agent of the Government. He stood in the same position as an agent employed in any mercantile transaction, and his principals are equally bound by his acts.

The whole question may be resumed in a few words—

1st.—The Government obtained the secret of my invention, sixteen years ago, and I have not received one penny compensation, neither can I obtain any explanation from them that will bear the test of truth.

2nd.—The certificates given in the Appendix afford ample evidence as to the necessity and importance of the process to give legal effect to the Anatomy Bill. One of those certificates was given after I had exhibited the last subject ever shown by me, and within about ten days of the final close of my last exhibition of preserved bodies. The Teachers have therefore had no grounds from actual observation for reversing their opinions; they admit the facilities I gave them, extending over many months, to examine my preparation, I now want to know why they subsequently combined to suppress my invention, and induced Sir James Graham, in his seat in Parliament, to make a false statement?

These points can only be attained by enquiry, and as it is an axiom of English law that “no wrong should exist without a remedy,” I again appeal to Her Majesty's Government to allow this matter to have a fair and open investigation.

Trusting that I have made out a case deserving such, and that the public will consider they have a deep interest in the question, I leave it at this point.

\* I have formally brought the subject before every Secretary-of-State for the Home Department from 1836 to 1854.



## A P P E N D I X.

---

*“To the Council, &c., of the Royal College of Surgeons,*

“GENTLEMEN,—Many members of your corporation, assuming to represent the whole of the Teachers in London, formed in 1836, a combination to suppress the use of my process for obviating some of the defects of the Anatomy Bill. The remarks I am about to make I apply to them, and not to the members of your corporation indiscriminately. I believe, I may fairly add, that some of your members are greatly dissatisfied with the treatment referred to, and against which I have so long protested.

“As the pamphlet I published in 1843 is well known to you, my present object is only to remind you of a few material facts immediately concerning your part in the subject matter.

“From my first introduction to you, in December, 1835, to the end of September, 1836, you deliberately and continuously examined the various preparations of anatomical subjects submitted by me to your notice. In fact you extended your caution so far that you removed some of my preparations to King’s College, where they were kept your own time, ten days, for the purpose of satisfying yourselves that they did not require daily attention. Mr. Partridge and several other gentlemen expressed themselves satisfied with the trial; and when I invited many of you to come to Guy’s Hospital and examine my preparations, then you excused yourselves by stating you were perfectly satisfied without further evidence—in fact, the advantages of the plan are self-evident. The authorities at St. Thomas’s Hospital gave me, in February, 1836, an amputated leg of a boy; it has been wrapped up in paper many years, and is now in a perfect state.

“From my earliest intercourse with you I explained that it was a trade with me to sell my inventions, and that in this case I intended taking out a patent right to cover the heavy expenses I had incurred in maturing the process. You objected to my obtaining a patent, urging that it would restrict its use, and urged that the Government were bound to give legal effect to the Anatomy Bill, it being under their control, and you then admitted that my plan would aid the objects of the Act. In March, 1836, you drew up a joint certificate to be presented to Government, I have your own rough drafts and fair copy now in my possession. You also gave me a letter of introduction to Mr. Henry Warburton, then a M.P., assuring me that he was, at that time, the only man who had the ear of Government on medical questions.

“You knew Government had, upon the strength of your written certificate, entertained the case and opened a negotiation with me, and that it was continued from March, 1836, to April, 1838.

“For the purpose of giving additional evidence of the value of my invention, I accepted an offer made me at Guy’s Hospital, in June, 1836, to preserve a number of entire subjects during the months of July, August, September, and into October, of that year. The object was that I should be placed above suspicion. Being within the walls of the Hospital, with all eyes on my movements, with no possibility of getting any other subjects but



those the Hospital authorities supplied, and no chance of making away with any without the knowledge of the Hospital authorities, with open doors daily from 10 to 4 o'clock, and full liberty for all medical men to dissect the preserved subjects. It was during this trial that the most material certificates herein referred to were given, and not one was given without personal examination.

"I will now bring an important point to your recollection, that is—you know the introduction you gave me by your joint certificate, in March, 1836, to Government, was the basis of a negotiation Government opened with me, through Mr. Warburton, for the adoption of my invention, and that upon the faith of your recommendation I had not taken out a patent right, but relied upon the honorable treatment of Government and yourselves; yet in defiance of good faith, in October, 1836, you entered into a combination with the Government Inspector of Schools of Anatomy, Dr. Somerville, to prevent the introduction of my invention; I should not have known the objects of your "Anatomical Committee," for that is the title your combination took, had you not quarrelled among yourselves. The result was, one of your members placed some of your original documents in my hands; I then discovered that, with other plans, your object was to obtain an Act of Parliament to give increased powers to the Home Office to supply you with more subjects, and that you intended also to bring to bear the weight of your influence upon Union Workhouse Boards to increase the supply of paupers' bodies. At the very time you were trying to get more bodies, I held one of your written certificates admitting that the supply raised before your combination existed, was, to a considerable extent lost and wasted. You carried your bad faith still further, for I find by your colleague Mr. Warburton's letter of the 9th April, 1838, that it was your influence which induced Government to treat me with injustice, by refusing to complete the contract you originated in March, 1836.

"For the purpose of putting this question in an irresistible form, I will rest the proof of the advantages of my invention on your own written admissions; they extend to the 24th September, 1836, being within 10 days of the close of the exhibition of my experiments. Since that date you have seen nothing, therefore you have had no means of refuting your own documents. Even the Government admitted, in 1836, that "the importance and utility of the process appear to be strongly attested by eminent Anatomists."

"Since you have come to the resolution of trying to undo all that you have admitted in favor of my process, your mode of action has been secrecy; it is only now and then, by fortuitous circumstances, that I have got any information of your proceedings; Mr. Browell's (Steward at Guy's Hospital) letter is one; that letter was addressed to a Member of the House of Lords, it was endorsed to the late Sir Astley Cooper to give it weight, the object of that letter was to destroy the confidence of the Peer to whom it was addressed in my veracity, and you thereby succeeded in inducing him not to bring the matter before Parliament. Mr. Browell never had seen any of my preparations; he is not a medical man, and personally knew nothing of the merits of the case; yet he was employed to promulgate an untruth. Your own certificates, given me at Guy's Hospital, refute his statement. Mr. Browell's testimony cannot be received without rejecting the evidence of Dr. Todd, Mr. Macmurdo, and others. I more than suspect that you also employed two other dependents at Guy's Hospital, then demonstrators looking out for promotion, to write letters and call upon gentlemen you knew I had seen. The demonstrators referred to had a preserved leg and thigh to dissect, which they jointly accomplished, and as I had then reason to believe I had to contend against their secret hostility, I submitted that leg and thigh, when dissected,



to Dr. Todd, and with it before him at the time he wrote, he gave me the certificate dated August, 1836.

"I wish to impress another circumstance on your attention, namely, your own written admission, in 1836, that the supply of subjects (then 600) collected only during the six winter months, was but half the number required, you, therefore admit, unless you can prove (which you cannot) that you have doubled the supply, that the Students of Anatomy have been inefficiently taught from 1836 to this time. The adoption of my process would have afforded you the additional supply of the six summer months; you are aware it is by far the best season for anatomical study; besides, for anatomical purposes one subject would, by the arrest of putrefaction, exceed in value three allowed to decompose naturally; consequently you would have had treble the supply you say is required. It is, therefore, evident that the students have been obstructed in the acquirement of anatomical knowledge, and anatomical subjects needlessly wasted.

"The next point to notice is the assertions you induced Sir James Graham to make in Parliament for the purpose of preventing the appointment of a Committee of the House of Commons for the investigation of my allegations against the fraudulent contraventions of the Anatomy Bill, and the treatment I had received in my endeavours to obviate some of its defects and to advance the objects of anatomical science. You have private access to Ministers of State, and it is evident you "ground up" Sir James Graham for the occasion. He stated that Sir Benjamin Brodie (reading his letter) had heard from Mr. Stanley, and Mr. Stanley had heard from Mr. Harrison, and Mr. Harrison had heard from some unnamed person, that my process was a complete failure. If the statement were true, why refer to a nameless person? Why did you not put forward the Members of your Anatomical Committee? Some of your members watched my experiments from December, 1835, to September, 1836, with great attention. As you had combined to stifle my invention, you would have rejoiced in proving it a "complete failure." But to proceed—Sir Benjamin Brodie added, that he and Sir Astley Cooper had signed a paper upon Mr. Roberts' representation that he had kept a body for a certain time; Sir Benjamin did sign the certificate dated March, 1836, but in his statement he withheld the most material part of the truth, namely, that I had many interviews with him, and that he came to my residence and minutely examined a large collection of my preparations, and not until after that examination did he sign any paper. Sir Astley Cooper paid me a visit also, and made minute examination before he signed the same document. The statement Sir James Graham was induced to make had no foundation in truth, and the result was, to prevent an open investigation before Parliament.

"Another means you have adopted to create a prejudice against me, has been by asserting that I want to impede the progress of Anatomical science, whereas, your own documents admit that the adoption of my plan would advance that science, protect the health of pupils, prevent the loss and waste of subjects, and aid the legal operation of the Anatomy Bill. Mr. Frederick Skey told me that my invention would advance anatomical science half a century.

"With your documents in my hands I may fairly ask—Why have you so long kept this invention out of use? Are not you the obstructors of anatomical science? Is it not your object to prevent summer dissection solely because you think it may interfere with your emoluments? Have you not a pecuniary interest in preventing ordinary practitioners from getting a perfect and practical knowledge of Anatomy? Such general acquirements would certainly make them more useful in their daily professional practice, and might spread over a wider range the large fees now chiefly taken by those gentlemen who are opposing the introduction of my invention.



“One word on your combination with Dr. Somerville:—When I first became acquainted with you, your complaints were very strong that the Doctor, for the purpose of advancing University College School of Anatomy, kept you without an equal share of subjects. Until that time I knew little or nothing about the fraudulent working of the Anatomy Bill. There were, at that period, about thirteen private Schools of Anatomy in London, all but one or two have since been annihilated. On the other hand, University College, with its many disadvantages, had succeeded in 1838, (the Anatomy Bill having been passed only six years before) in obtaining a School of Medical Pupils equal in number to three, if not four, of the best and oldest Hospital Schools in London; in fact, pupils were compelled to leave some of these schools because they could not get subjects. Dr. Somerville, and his patron Mr. Warburton, knew that my invention would interfere with the undue preference the Doctor had conferred on University College; they also knew, that without the combination with your body the process must come into use. The next step was the Doctor’s circular to you in September, 1836, offering to give you an EQUAL distribution of bodies upon condition of your uniting with him to obtain an increased supply of pauper subjects. You joined the Doctor and betrayed me. I know a fresh idea arose in your minds, namely, to prevent summer dissection.

“Mr. Stanley told me it should not be adopted at St. Bartholomew’s Hospital. A gentleman connected with a London Hospital, who does not approve of your proceedings, told me a few months since that he knew the Teachers of Anatomy would not consent to dissection being pursued during the summer months. If beneficial, you are not justified in opposing it. If not advantageous, you have no reason to dread its being adopted. My opinion is, that it would economise the time and also the pecuniary expenses of the Students to a large extent. I have already endeavoured to convince you that you have seriously interfered with the interests of the Students by opposing my invention. I have another very grave consideration to urge upon your consideration:—you have admitted that my process would protect the health of pupils (I say, their lives also, as my plan destroys the animal poison which exists more or less in dead bodies) you know that bad health frequently terminates in death. If a man puts an obstruction in a public road, and thereby, through his neglect, causes the death of a person going over that road, he would be in law guilty of manslaughter; if the injury were short of death, he would be liable to pay damages in proportion to the injury done. To a pupil studying anatomy, the dissecting room is his only road, and you are as morally guilty as any other obstructor if you needlessly expose the lives and health of Students to hazards which might be avoided. From the best information I can obtain, the deaths from puncture in Schools of Anatomy in London, is above seven per annum, therefore, in the last sixteen years, the loss has not been less than 112 persons; this is independent of the many hundreds who during that time have suffered in health from the unnecessary offensive condition of dissecting rooms.

“The evidence of the “importance and utility” of my process, is your own written admissions—they would satisfy any jury or court of equity—you are satisfied also, otherwise you would not have resorted to the means you have pursued to suppress a fair and open investigation into my allegations. You have harrassed me with sixteen years expences, and neither you or your colleague Mr. Warburton, have contributed a single shilling; you, therefore, have no right to expect me to incur further costs for additional proof. I am satisfied with your certificates now in my possession, but as you have large funds, contributed by the profession, at your command, if you will consent to pay all expenses, I will preserve any number of subjects you may require,



upon condition that it is a fair and open investigation. In making this offer I do not intend to abandon my claim on the Government, or to accede to any terms that would give you fresh opportunity of circumventing me.

"Allow me to add, that I am determined, whatever further sacrifices I may have to make, for I consider it a duty I owe society as well as myself, never to rest until I obtain a fair and open investigation. Cunning, let it be ever so adroitly managed, will not carry a man honorably through life; like base coin, it may be made convertible for a time, but eventually its inherent worthlessness will manifest itself to all.

(Signed)

"WM. ROBERTS."

"February 25th, 1853."

---

*College of Surgeons, Feb. 26th, 1853.*

"SIR,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 25th instant, addressed to the Council of the College, and which I will lay before the Council at its next meeting.

(Signed)

"EDWARD BALFOUR."

"To WM. ROBERTS."

---

"To the Right Honorable Sir James Graham, Bt., M.P., &c. &c. &c.

*Manchester, Sep. 12, 1853.*

"Sir,—Since I last took the liberty of soliciting your recommendation to Viscount Palmerston to grant a fair, and open investigation into my allegations on the subject of the Anatomy Bill, and the connection of my invention therewith, I have made numerous applications to his Lordship with repetitions of the same request; but not having been so fortunate as to obtain from him a definite answer, I am again induced to solicit your interference. If you have given this matter consideration it must have occurred to you that I have long had the power of putting the whole subject in a position that would ensure its investigation. I have deferred doing so, hoping Government would prefer adopting an equitable course, and thereby make further application unnecessary. Ruinous as the treatment I have met with has been to me, I do not want to make a triumph of the strength of my claim—all I ask is to obtain impartial justice.

"You are aware that Government first admitted the importance and utility of my invention for giving legal effect to some of the clauses of the Anatomy Bill, and then obtained from me the secret of my invention, for the alleged purpose of being satisfied that the materials used were cheap, innocuous, and easy of application. I remonstrated against granting the request without the stipulated payment being made at the time the particulars of the process were given.—After hesitating, for two months, to comply with the request, I was positively assured that I might rely upon being honorably dealt with. I then, acting under the advice of Sir George Sinclair, gave the Government the whole detail of my invention; I was then told Government were perfectly satisfied, and only required a few days to search into precedents for making private grants. From that day to this I have not been paid a shilling. I scarcely need inform you that Mr. Henry Warburton, then M.P. for Bridport, acted as the agent of Government in this transaction, and that I have before proved his heartless duplicity in the matter. My letter to the College of Surgeons (you have a copy dated 25th Feb., 1853) gives an outline



of the treacherous treatment I received at the hands of some of the Teachers of Anatomy, in London. I will now pass on to your speech made in Parliament, July 17th, 1842, its object was to resist the prayer of my petition for enquiry into the working of the Anatomy Bill, and the connection my invention had with the subject. Upon that occasion you assured the House that the process had been fully investigated and found to be a complete failure. You told the House that Mr. Stanley, Sir Benjamin Brodie, and Mr. Harrison were your authorities.

“Mr. Hardy who had the conduct of my petition, relying on your statement, withdrew it, and apologized to the House for its introduction. Your object was accomplished—you prevented investigation—and in your place, as a minister of the crown, cast a slur upon both my character and my invention, and that statement through the public press, has been spread over the wide world. You know I have frequently stated my belief that you were deceived by Mr. Stanley and the other gentlemen; but within a few days of the date of your speech Mr. Hardy, and myself, gave you ample evidence that all you had said to the injury of my reputation, and disparagement of my invention, was a tissue of untruth from beginning to end. You admitted it by subsequently offering to grant a secret investigation; but that would have been to place me at the mercy of my avowed opponents, Mr. Stanley, Sir Benjamin Brodie, and some other gentlemen connected with the College of Surgeons, who were to make their report to you.—On the face of this proposal an impartial observer must see that I had no chance of obtaining an honest report; but being very anxious to terminate the question, I proposed leaving to your pleasure to appoint whom you thought fit, (however identified with previous opposition) provided you would allow the investigation to be a fair and open one, and not at my expence. Because I could not consent to leave my process in the hands of Messrs. Stanley, Brodie, and others, to be secretly dealt with, I have not yet been granted an open investigation. If these gentlemen were not conscious that they had led you into making an unfounded statement, what reason have they to dread an open enquiry?

“There is another point to which I beg to draw your attention,—namely, your admission that certain clauses of the Anatomy Bill had not been complied with. I had before noticed this. I will now only refer, out of a large number, to the three following facts:—1st, The participation of the Government Inspector, Dr. Somerville, and the Government Undertaker, Mr. Hewett, then Master of Holborn Union Workhouse, in the fraud of decking out a journeyman undertaker in canonicals, to represent a clergyman of the Established Church of England, to read the burial service over several hundred shells interred in a piece of unconsecrated ground, called Globe Fields. The object of the fraud being to make money. 2nd, The trade carried on by some parties connected with Schools of Anatomy in human bones. 3rd, The fact of paupers bodies sent from Marylebone Workhouse, at a charge of 2s. 6d. each, to the School of Anatomy, in which Mr. Warburton is an influential shareholder, and retailed out to the students, in eight parts, at an aggregate charge of £3 10s. each body.

“It has been too much the practice in this controversy to represent me as mis-stating facts, it is, therefore, fortunate that I can fall back upon confirmatory evidence. The Teachers of Anatomy and the Government Inspector have borne strong testimony in favor of my invention. I can trust my case to their written statements. And I can rely on your admissions that the Anatomy Bill has been contravened. Had justice been fairly administered many of the Teachers of Anatomy, the Government Inspector, Dr. Somerville, the Government Undertaker Mr. Hewett, and several other



influential parties, would have been prosecuted to conviction. A few obscure violators of the Act have been punished, but all the great offenders have been passed by without notice.

"I respectfully ask you to look at the position of Government in this matter. They have admitted that "the importance and utility of the invention is strongly attested by high medical authorities." They have obtained the secret of my invention upon condition of paying me a stipulated amount as compensation. Not being able to obtain my money I enquired the reason for non-payment, and Mr. Henry Warburton informed me, as he stated with sorrow, that "the Teachers of Anatomy, opposed to summer dissections, have prevailed against you at the Home Office (not one word was then said about the failure of the process). I then applied to Parliament for enquiry, and Government and Mr. Henry Warburton opposed my petition by making unfounded statements.—I remonstrated, and solicited an honest investigation—up to this hour all my appeals have been of no avail. The result is my invention is rendered nugatory.—1st, By the combination of the Teachers of Anatomy in London.—2nd, By the refusal of Government to adopt it, obviating as it would many of the defects of the Anatomy Bill, and without giving any valid reason for doing so.—3rd, By Government opposing all my applications (I have made three) to Parliament for enquiry into my allegations.

"I have devoted many years of my life to this subject, and not only have I had to pay the whole expences of maturing the process, but I have also been put to great additional costs through two years negociation with Government; during those two years I had to walk 600 miles backwards and forwards to Mr. Warburton's residence to hear his excuses for delay—but his policy was to procrastinate the negociation; and I have since ascertained that the School of Anatomy with which he was connected received about £25,000 within the period the Government were negotiating with me. If my process had been in operation it would have checked some of the contraventions of the Anatomy Bill, and this large amount could not have been realized by one unduly favored school. In fact while I was being harassed by expences, and loss of time, Mr. Warburton was increasing his, and his copartners illegal gains at my cost.

"The sale of inventions is of daily occurrence, I have made at least 30 sales of my own, and the transaction in question is as much a matter of trade as the sale of any commercial article. It must occur to you that Government stand in a wrong position—they have got possession of my invention and are bound to pay for it, or to give a reason that will bear the best of truth for not doing so. These remarks are not intended to produce irritation, but only to call your attention to the wrong done to the community, as well as myself, through allowing Mr. Warburton and the Teachers of Anatomy to have undue influence, and thereby to corrupt the channel of justice. If you will be good enough to take the trouble to explain to Viscount Palmerston, that what you have stated in the House of Commons to the prejudice of my case, you have reason to believe is unfounded in truth, I cannot doubt this matter may be brought to a satisfactory termination; and as you are now aware I have unjustly suffered, for more than 11 years, both in reputation and pocket, through the mis-statements referred to, I trust your high sense of honor will induce you to comply with this application.

"I have the honor to be, &c., &c.

(Signed)

"W. ROBERTS."



*Devonport, Sep. 14, 1853.*

“Sir,—I am directed by Sir James Graham to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th instant, and in reply to inform you that he cannot interfere with Lord Palmerston in the mode which you point out.

(Signed)

“H. O'BRIEN.”

“Mr. Wm. Roberts.”

*“To the Right Honorable Viscount Palmerston, M.P., &c. &c. &c.”*

*“Manchester, Feb. 24th, 1854.”*

“My Lord,—Having on several occasions addressed your Lordship on the subject of my invention for aiding the objects of anatomical science, and on its advantages for giving legal effect to some of the clauses of the Anatomy Bill; and also taken the liberty of placing before you a copy of my pamphlet; and a copy of a letter addressed by me, on the 25th Feb. 1853, to the College of Surgeons; I now beg permission to hand you a copy of letter I addressed to Sir James Graham, on the 12th September, 1853.

“I originally intended to have taken out a patent right for my invention—when the Teachers of Anatomy ascertained my object, they objected to a patent by urging that it would restrict its use, and also enable me to make too large a profit, and they then suggested that I should accept from Government a sum, being about one-sixth part of the estimated profit, in consideration of that sum being paid at once. That proposal was the origin of their joint certificate, dated March, 1836, to be presented to Government. The Government, through Mr. Warburton, opened a negotiation with me about that date, and continued it until April, 1838, and during that period obtained from me the secret of my invention, upon the plea of wanting to know that the materials used were cheap, innocuous, and easy of application. The Government then expressed themselves satisfied, and told me, Mr. Spring Rice, now Lord Monteagle, only required a few days for searching into precedents as to making private grants.

“During these two years, although the Teachers of Anatomy, in London, Dr. Somerville the Government Inspector, and Mr. Warburton, were expressing to me their deep sense of the utility of my process, and determination to see justice done, they were at the same time secretly using their private influence with Government, and also organizing a combination (named the Anatomical Committee) for suppressing the use of my invention. Mr. Warburton's (the Government agent in this matter) admission in his letter, of 9th April, 1838, will go far to confirm this charge. If further evidence were required to prove the injustice of their intentions it will be supplied by the fact of the unfounded statement they induced Sir James Graham to make in the House of Commons. I might also refer to Mr. Browell's letter as additional evidence against them.

“It is very probable I may be blamed for showing that I have met with treatment morally worse than highway robbery. Had I submitted quietly I might have been blamed for not stating the wrong done; but whatever may be said, I am prepared with proof, that I made no complaint until after I had, for months, the clearest evidence that a combination had been formed to suppress the use of my invention.

“Your Lordship will please to take into consideration that in maturing this process I devoted years of time, and paid every shilling of the expences,



and through placing reliance in the honor of Government, by trusting them with the secret of my invention, I deprived myself of the means of obtaining legal redress, or of securing remuneration by other means; I, therefore, submit that I have just cause to solicit your Lordship to repair the injury I have suffered.

“It is too evident that the secret investigation proposed by Sir James Graham would have placed me in the power of my avowed opponents; they would not have reported in my favor, without at the same time admitting, that what they had stated to Sir James Graham was devoid of truth. I am, therefore, induced to solicit your Lordship to grant a fair, open, and impartial investigation.

“In laying this matter before your Lordship it is not my intention to give you offence, or unnecessary trouble; but should I not be so fortunate as to obtain your favourable consideration I shall have no alternative but to again petition Parliament for the appointment of a committee to investigate my allegations.

I have the honor to be, my Lord, &c.

(Signed)

“W. ROBERTS.”

“*Whitehall, July 19th, 1854.*

“Sir,—In reply to your letter I beg to inform you, that Lord Palmerston declines to reopen a subject which has been so very frequently under the consideration of previous Secretaries of State. There is therefore nothing to add to former communications which have been addressed to you from the Home Office.

(Signed)

“R. W. GRAY.”

“Mr. Wm. ROBERTS.”

*London, July 28th, 1854.*

“*To the Rt. Hon. Viscount Palmerston, M.P., &c. &c. &c.*

“MY LORD,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship’s letter, dated the 19th instant, in reply to my application of the 24th February last.

“I should not have again troubled you with an application on the subject did I not feel assured that you had anxious desire that every matter connected with your department should be treated with equity. I am, therefore, induced to remind your Lordship that you have been misinformed when you applied the term “re-opened” to my case, for in fact this matter has not yet been investigated; both sides of the question have not been heard. My complaint is, that all the influence of party and power enjoyed by the opponents of my invention, has been used to prevent investigation. Even on the several occasions that the subject has been brought before Parliament misrepresentations have been made for the purpose of stifling enquiry. I may also add, that official returns referring to this subject were ordered by the Crown to be laid before Parliament on May 20th, 1841, and again on the 20th December, 1852, and those returns, which would go far to show the necessity for having this matter fairly investigated, have not been furnished.

"So far as the public and the mass of the medical profession are concerned, great benefit would arise from an open and impartial inquiry, for it would result in raising the standard of anatomical education. I know it has been urged that I have a pecuniary interest in the matter—that is true; but in the sense only as a butcher, baker, or any other tradesman has who devotes his time and his capital to his business. I had not proposed to go to the Government at all; it was, as the written documents show, at the earnest request of the Teachers of Anatomy that I was led to do so, and subsequently at the request of the Government that I furnished them with the secret of my invention. I have never solicited from Government any favor, all I ask is fair and impartial justice. I cannot tell my butcher and my baker when they present me with accounts for beef and bread that they are seeking for reward therefore I decline looking at their accounts, or either could I honestly plead that long credit was a bar to a just debt, and I respectfully submit, that when Government enters into engagements, the same regard to equitable dealing should exist as is followed in ordinary business transactions.

"I am well aware that a fair opening of this subject would disclose some awkward facts, but I respectfully submit that justice ought not to be denied to me because the opponents of my invention have been guilty of malpractices by perverting the working of the Anatomy Act to their own pecuniary advantages. Your Lordship has control over the working of the Anatomy Act; without again detailing the numerous contraventions stated in my petition, printed by order of the House of Commons on March 25th, 1844, I will confine my remarks to the 13th, or burial clause:—from my personal observation, extending over many years, I am convinced that on an average not one fourth of the body is buried. This contravention of the law as is admitted by the Teachers of Anatomy, might be avoided by the application of my invention. I have strong evidence of an organized opposition against the use of my invention, and the power of this exists in the influence it can bring to bear against me at the Home Office.

"Relying on your Lordship's love of justice, and with a view to refute the statements made to the prejudice of my invention, I beg to say, that Government paying any reasonable expenses incurred, I am willing to undertake the preservation of a number of bodies, and to submit them to open examination, sufficient for the purpose of again showing the Government, in the words of my Lord John Russell, "the importance and utility of the invention."

"Permit me, in conclusion, to say, that my sense of the injustice which I have experienced in this matter is so strong, that I cannot consent to let it rest in its present state.

"I have, &c., &c.,

"W. ROBERTS."

---

*Note.—No answer returned to this letter.*



(A)

## JOINT CERTIFICATE.

" *March*, 1836.

" We, the undersigned Surgeons and Anatomical Teachers in London, have witnessed the effects of a liquid, prepared and employed by Mr. William Roberts, for the purpose of preserving animal bodies from putrefaction.

" *We are convinced, from what we have seen*, that Mr. Roberts's preparation is capable of keeping in a fresh, moist, and inoffensive state, the flesh of animals; and we think it may become in this way of important use to Surgeons and Students of Anatomy; and that it may be made to promote, materially, the objects of the Anatomical Bill.

" We shall be glad if any means can be devised, by which this discovery may be made cheaply available to the profession, without obliging its inventor to tie it by *patent right*.

(Signed)

" ASTLEY COOPER.

B. C. BRODIE,

JOSEPH HENRY GREEN,

GILBERT MACMURDO,

Senior Lecturer on Anatomy, St. Thomas's Hospital.

R. O. GRAINGER,

Senior Lecturer on Anatomy, Webb Street School.

BRANSBY B. COOPER,

Senior Lecturer on Anatomy at Guy's Hospital.

FREDERICK C. SKEY,

Senior Lecturer on Anatomy at Aldersgate-street School.

EDWARD STANLEY,

Senior Lecturer on Anatomy at St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

RICHARD PARTRIDGE.

Senior Lecturer on Anatomy at King's College

R. B. TODD,

Senior Lecturer on Anatomy at Westminster Hospital.'

---

(B.)" 5, *Saville Row*, *March* 10, 1836.

" Sir,—Having availed myself of the opportunity which you have afforded me, of examining various portions of the human body preserved by you, some for a period exceeding six weeks, I owe it to you, no less than to the Medical Profession, to bear my testimony to the merits of the process by which such decidedly beneficial results have been obtained. *The portion of an amputated leg and the arm called for particular attention*, inasmuch as the internal parts did not appear to be hardened, and but slightly discoloured, while they were *perfectly free from any offensive smell*.

" I am, therefore, disposed to believe that the process is likely to be useful; but to what extent, must wholly depend upon its cost, and the facility of its application.

" I have been directed by Lord John Russell to afford every facility for the purpose specified in your letter; but as I consider the results of your experiments *already decisive*, I TRUST YOU WILL NOT THINK IT NECESSARY TO HAVE RECOURSE TO ANY MORE EXTENDED MEANS OF PROVING IT.

(Signed)

JAMES C. SOMERVILLE.

Government Inspector of Schools of Anatomy.

"To Mr. W. Roberts."

(C.)

“*Lancaster Place, March 19, 1833.*”

“Sir,—I have received your letter of yesterday, in which you request to know what I conceive to be the advantages of your Antiseptic. In my opinion they are as follows:—

“1.—As the *schools are not, at present, supplied with above one-half of the bodies required for dissection during the winter*, and as the deficiency is particularly felt during the mild weather at the beginning of the session, I think that your Antiseptic would be valuable in preserving such unclaimed bodies as might be given up by the parishes during the two preceding months of August and September. By this plan, there would be something at least for students to work on, and as the burial of the bodies would only be delayed a little longer, I cannot see any objection to it.

“2.—From what I have seen of the effects of your Antiseptic, *I can declare that it possesses several advantages over others which at different times have been tried*. It does not evaporate like spirit, but preserves the parts in their *natural moist condition and appearance*; it does not spoil instruments, or unnaturally harden the flesh like oxy-muriate of mercury, salt, nitre, alum, &c.

“Of course your preparation, *by keeping the atmosphere of dissecting rooms sweet, would contribute in an important degree to the health of the students*; but to be generally useful in Anatomical Schools, the expence of preserving each body should not exceed ten shillings.\*

(Signed)

“RICHARD PARTRIDGE.”

“To Mr. W. Roberts.”

\* The cost would be *under* ten shillings.—W. R.

(D.)

“46, *Lincoln's Inn Fields, March 21, 1836.*”

“Sir,—In reply to your inquiry respecting the results of your Antiseptic Process, and its probable advantages, I beg to say that I cannot doubt that its general use will render the *number of subjects* available for the purposes of dissection, and the *regularity of the supply, by far greater than at present*; since, without the means of preservation in a state fitted for anatomical purposes (*which your plan alone offers*), many subjects must be completely *lost and wasted*. I cannot, therefore, but regard your process, if it can be carried on at a moderate expence, as a most valuable aid to the beneficial operation of the Anatomy Bill. I may add, that the parts preserved appear to me in as perfect a condition for dissection as in the recent state.

(Signed)

“JOSEPH HENRY GREEN.”

“To Mr. W. Roberts.”

(E.)

“*Charterhouse Square, March 22, 1836.*”

“Sir,—In reply to your request that I would state my opinion on the subject of your Antiseptic, I beg to say that any mode by which the progress of decomposition can be arrested must *necessarily be advantageous to the student because it enables him to pursue his subject with greater care and deliberation, and to revise the occupation of previous days' dissection*. This is important, inasmuch as the present supply of material is very deficient.



Another advantage would arise from the means that would thereby be afforded of *summer dissection*. I cannot say that I attach very great importance to the fact of its purifying the atmosphere of the dissecting room, because I do think that, for the most part, medical students are very sensible of its impure condition, or that their health sustains considerable injury from that cause. I think it *calculated to confer great advantage on the student of anatomy in every country*; but in order to render it generally available, I consider the expence of its application per subject, ought not to exceed the sum of ten or twelve shillings.

(Signed)

“FREDERICK C. SKEY.”

“Lecturer on Anatomy, and Assistant Surgeon to  
St. Bartholomew’s Hospital.”

“To Mr. W. Roberts.”

---

(F.)

May, 1836.

“Having witnessed the results of the experiments of Mr. Roberts, instituted for the purpose of arresting the progress of decomposition of animal matter, I am of opinion that Mr. Roberts’s plan has *proved highly successful, and that the desired end has been thus far accomplished without producing either hardness or dryness*. I am likewise of opinion, that the above invention may be advantageously applied in *aid of the difficulties* that at present attend the study of anatomy, by dissection in this country.

(Signed)

FREDERICK C. SKEY.

“Lecturer of Anatomy, and Assistant Secretary to  
St. Bartholomew’s Hospital.”

---

(G.)

“26, *Parliament Street*, Aug. 23rd, 1836.

“I hereby certify, that I have had various opportunities of forming an opinion respecting the value of the Fluid prepared by Mr. Roberts for the purpose of preserving animal substances. I believe it to be a most valuable acquisition to the Anatomist, and that it preserves parts of human bodies with less alteration of the natural aspect of the different structures than any other fluid or preparation I have ever seen employed. *Indeed I cannot hesitate to say, that a limb preserved in this fluid, even for so long a period as six weeks or two months, is quite as useful for the purposes of dissection as in its freshest state.*

(Signed)

“R. B. TODD.”

“Professor of Physiology, and Morbid Anatomy  
in King’s College, London.”

---

(H.)

“7, *New Broad Street*, August 25, 1836.

“Dear Sir,—Having examined very carefully some bodies which have been preserved for different lengths of time by means of your Antiseptic Fluid, I most willingly express my opinion that it is very likely to prove a *valuable acquisition to all medical schools.*

“There was one body with which I was much pleased, viz., one which had been *injected* a month after you had it in your possession; *the injection had run well*, and the parts which were dissected looked very fresh and

exhibited all the characters of the several tissues. I likewise examined a limb in which the *large* and *deep seated* muscles had been dissected, and they possessed the colour and freshness of a body very recently dead. Under these circumstances, I hope you will meet with that encouragement to which your exertions have fully entitled you.

(Signed)

“GILBERT MACKMURDO.”

“To Mr. W. Roberts.”

---

(I.)

“7, *New Broad Street*, Sep. 24, 1836.

“Having on several occasions examined different bodies which have been preserved by Mr. Roberts’s Antiseptic Fluid for various periods of time, I most willingly bear my testimony in favour of this gentleman’s discovery. I have dissected portions of bodies preserved in this manner for months previous to my visits; I found them free from the usual offensive smell; the different structures were preserved in their integrity, and the deep-seated muscles, &c. exhibited the colour and firmness peculiar to the flesh of bodies recently dead. The *skin*, *vessels*, and *nerves*, as well as the *internal viscera*, excited my surprise by the natural and fresh appearance. From the experience I have had of the effects of this process, I am led to anticipate the best results, whether I consider the health of the students, or their *increased advantages* in studying Anatomy. I may also observe, that the Dissecting Instruments do not appear to be in any way injured by the fluid used by Mr. Roberts in his process.

(Signed)

“GILBERT MACKMURDO.

“Senior Lecturer on Anatomy and Physiology  
at St. Thomas’s Hospital.”

---

(J.)

38, *Finsbury Square*, Oct. 4, 1836.

“My dear Lord,—In a correspondence with Mr. Spring Rice on the subject of a very important discovery relating to the science of Anatomy, I have been informed that the matter has been referred entirely to you. Mr. Roberts, the author of this discovery, informs me that he has not yet been favoured with any communication with you; and it is of considerable moment to him, as well as to the Anatomical Schools, to know what may be the intention of Government, I have to entreat your early attention to the subject.

“I may state to you, that *I have seen the results of the process repeatedly, and that I consider it perfect*. It is agreed by every Anatomist who has spoken of it, that it is most excellent and most valuable; I cannot, therefore, consider there can be a more fitting opportunity for the exercise of liberality towards an inventor by such an administration as that which, happily for this country, now exists.

(Signed)

“GEORGE BIRKBECK.”

“To the Right Honourable Lord John Russell,  
Secretary-of-State for the Home Department, &c., &c., &c.”



(K.)

*Hadley, May 28, 1838.*

“Dear Sir,—I have enclosed a letter to Sir Robert Inglis in order that you may state your case to him. What to recommend under the present difficulty in which you are involved, I do not see other than the one you have adopted, of bringing your case before the Parliament by means of some influential member.

“I fear, however, that under the present circumstances, you will have the opposition of those, without whom your application will not be successful.

(Signed)

“JOSEPH HENRY GREEN.”

“To Mr. W. Roberts.”

---

### CONVICTED PRISONERS.

---

Abstract of return to an address of the Honorable the House of Commons, dated 21st June, 1842:—“For return of the number of Convicted Persons who died in each year, 1840 and 1841, before the expiration of their sentences, in Prisons, Hospitals, and all other places used for the reception of Convicted Persons in England.”

1840.		1841.	
Felony.....	249	Felony.....	308
Misdemeanors....	44	Misdemeanors....	35
Other Offences....	38	Other Offences....	28
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Total	331	Total	371

THE  
OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY OF THE  
NAVY  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

TO THE  
HONORABLE  
MEMBERS OF THE  
NAVY

THE  
OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY OF THE  
NAVY  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE  
OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY OF THE  
NAVY  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE  
OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY OF THE  
NAVY  
WASHINGTON, D. C.